



The HHSA Connection

THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NOVEMBER 2006

Macchione Wins National "Rising Star" Award

HHSA Deputy Director Honored for Technology Innovation

Nick Macchione, Agency Deputy Director, is one of 53 winners of an inaugural awards program created by a national government information technology magazine to honor burgeoning leaders in the government information technology arena.



Macchione

Macchione was chosen by a panel of independent judges to receive a Rising Star Award from *Federal Computer Week* magazine. The award was given at a banquet on Oct. 12 in Washington, D.C.

The award was presented for leadership that "made a difference in the way agencies and companies develop, acquire, manage

and use information technology," according to Christopher J. Dorobek, Editor, *Federal Computer Week*.

This was exemplified by the Mobile Remote Workforce (MRW) project that Macchione spearheaded in February 2005. MRW uses cutting edge technology to improve accuracy of client referrals for Public Health nurses in the field, among other things.

"We're all proud of MRW, and are delighted to see it recognized on a national basis," said Macchione. "MRW would not have succeeded without hard work from hundreds of people, from Public Health nurses to Information Technology specialists."

MRW was a pilot project for Business Process Re-engineering (BPR), introduced by the County Administrative Officer as a method of achieving operational

excellence by improving workforce productivity. The MRW pilot took shape with an eye on making the county workforce more efficient and improving the effectiveness of existing operating systems – while maintaining the same high level of customer service.

"MRW would not have succeeded without hard work from hundreds of people from Public Health nurses to Information Technology specialists."

- Macchione

The results have been remarkable, eliminating duplicate processes, dramatically cutting back on paperwork, slashing the time nurses have to spend in the field on administrative tasks, and boosting accuracy rates for client referrals.

Special Section Inside:

Please see pages 4-5 for a very special story about a North County couple that opened their hearts and homes to 14 foster children and a newly adopted daughter.

"In taking the foster parent classes and seeing the videos, and finally having the children in your home, you feel compelled to save all these kids."

- Susan Rucker



You Can Make a Senior Smile This Thanksgiving

MOMeals Volunteers to Serve 1,500 Homebound Elders for Thanksgiving

Not everyone can share a holiday feast with relatives. Some have no family. Some are too weak to shop for and prepare a meal. For hundreds of homebound seniors in San Diego County, their Thanksgiving dinner might be a TV dinner if it weren't for volunteers from the County's MOMeals program.

MOMeals gives these folks something to smile about on this holiday. MOMeals, which is administered by the Agency's Aging & Independence Services, has had volunteers delivering more than 1,500 meals each Thanksgiving to shut-in seniors since 1991. The MOMeals sites are in South Bay, East County and Central San Diego.

This Thanksgiving, each MOMeals volunteer will visit a handful of seniors, spending time chatting and bringing a hot turkey dinner with all the trimmings,



THANKSGIVING

plus a carnation and a colorful placemat made by local school children.

No meal recipient pays for the dinner. The food is covered by generous community donations. All money donated to MOMeals goes to meals, not administrative costs.

Anyone interested in volunteering or making a donation to MOMeals can call (858) 495-5279.

A Message from Jean M. Shepard

Health and Human Services Agency Director

If you're concerned about the nation's food supply lately, you're not alone. Recent news stories about spinach, lettuce, carrot juice, and even raw milk contaminated with E. coli (0157:H7) bacteria have everyone wondering how safe it is to eat a salad or even pour milk into their coffee. But how many of you know staff within our Agency are involved in keeping an eye on these kinds of situations?



While there were no local cases of E. coli reported as a result of recent incidents, our Public Health Services Community Epidemiology Division works closely with the State Department of Health Services and the County Department of Environmental Health to keep on top of the latest events. They also alert local physicians to unusual health events, through the Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN).

If an outbreak is discovered, the Epidemiology team interviews victims to find out where the outbreak originated. It's time consuming, detailed, and requires skills not unlike those of a detective. It's good to know this dedicated team of professionals is on constant watch, with the goal of keeping our community safe and healthy.

EMAN is available to the public by clicking [here](#).

Jean M. Shepard

County Aims to Get Early Start on Domestic Violence Prevention

Domestic violence prevention isn't just about working with families; the County is studying and addressing violent teen behavior, before it becomes a lifelong habit.

The Agency's Office of Violence Prevention, in partnership with the Domestic Violence Council, recently examined teen relationship violence (TRV) and found prevalent problems among teens in the County. Fifteen to twenty percent of teens stated they had physically abused dating partners in the past year (including hitting, punching and shaking).

Further, roughly one in three teens said that it was "sometimes," "often," or "always" okay for boyfriends to resort to dating violence when a girlfriend "flirts with someone else at a party," "threatens to break up with him," or "she is drunk/drugged or acting crazy."

Luckily, prevention and intervention programs have proven to successfully decrease these behaviors.

What can you do? Here are some suggestions from the American Bar Association:

- Develop a gender neutral approach to TRV
- Ask open ended questions about dating
- Provide information about healthy relationships

For more information, contact the County's 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-888-DVLINKS (385-4657) or www.dvlinks.org.

For the price of one latte a week (\$4) you can help United Way/CHAD and CECO provide:

- One month of prenatal vitamins for sixteen uninsured mothers; or
- Two months of prescriptions for an uninsured adult with diabetes and heart disease; or
- 120 meals for homebound seniors; or
- Vision screening and eyeglasses for an uninsured child.

Won't you help make a difference in San Diego? United Way/CHAD and CECO - together, a little adds up to a lot.



HHSA Director of Operations **Paula Landau-Cox** helps kick off the combined United Way/CHAD and CECO campaign.

CECO Turns 50

The County Employees Charitable Organization (CECO) commemorated 50 years of County employees working to better their communities with a celebration on the County Administrative Center's west lawn Sept. 27.

The event also served as a kick-off to the combined United Way/CHAD and CECO drives. HHSA Director of Operations **Paula Landau-Cox** was on hand to address the celebration attendees and help get them geared up for the upcoming campaign.

CECO was established in Aug. 1956. Since that time, County active and retired employees have given more than \$20 million to a wide variety of non-profit agencies in San Diego. These funds have provided medication and dental services to children and families living with cancer, diabetes and lung disease and provided start-up funding, construction and maintenance for senior centers, residential rehabilitation facilities and other related services and programs.

[HHSA Events Calendar](#) - Check out what's happening, or, advise your Web contact to post events.

Filling a Void...*With Love*

North County Foster Parents Open Up Their Family to Adopted Daughter

When Marine Staff Sergeant Ronald Rucker and his wife Susan first came to San Diego, they thought that they were merely here to enjoy the great weather. They did not intend to become foster parents, much less adopt a child. Now, they are in the process of adopting an eight-month old baby girl, have had 14 children in their care since becoming foster parents in January 2005, and are inspiring others to follow in their footsteps.

Susan, a former Marine herself, found life somewhat boring after leaving military service. While she volunteered in the community, it wasn't completely fulfilling. That's when she saw a flyer at Camp Pendleton about children needing homes and foster parents. Her husband Ron wasn't completely convinced, but after a month of constant encouragement (or "prodding," as Ron puts it), he relented and they began the process of becoming foster parents.

"I wasn't completely sold on it until we started getting the foster kids - then my whole attitude changed," Ron said. Susan felt the same way. "In taking the foster parent classes and seeing the videos, and finally having the children in your home, you feel compelled to save all these kids," commented Susan. "But don't get me wrong, it's a tough job, having different people together, raised in different lifestyles, going to court or doctors appointments, and the sadness that comes when one of the children leaves, sadness for you, the children, and the other children in your care."

"It takes patience," chimed in Ron. "It's not for everyone. But the issues aren't with the kids, they're with the parents. If you put a child in a loving environment, they'll flourish - but if kids

are raised in an environment where the child is not the priority, they'll flounder." Susan adds, "What keeps us going is knowing that, because of us, children in our care know what love is, what it's like to have a clean bed and have a bath, to know what fun is, and what a real family and positive environment can be like."

It has affected those around them too, and several neighbors have expressed interest in also becoming foster parents. One had mentioned to them that they didn't realize so many children needed homes. According to the Agency, each day in North County there are over 50 children waiting for a family to care for them. "Our foster families are the shining stars in the lives of abused, neglected and abandoned children" says **Nick Macchione**, Agency Deputy Director. "We commend the Ruckers, and foster families like them, who are dedicated to healing and nurturing our community's most vulnerable children."

In May, the Agency honored Ron and Susan with the Starfish Award for Making a Difference in Children's Lives. The award was presented at the North County Foster Family Celebration and Picnic held at Green Oak Ranch in Vista. Additionally, the Ruckers were chosen as this year's National Military Family Association's Family of the Year. Recipients are selected from nominees from all branches of the military nationwide.

While the Ruckers aren't quite certain of who nominated them (they received several nominations), they know their commitment to being foster parents stood out. In a special ceremony held at Camp Pendleton, the Ruckers received a plaque, \$500, and a \$250 check toward their favorite charity, St. Jude Children's Center. They promptly used the award money towards a "bonding study" for the adoption of a baby that came into their care when she was just two days old. Ron noted, "While the awards are great, it's not what we're in it for. It's really to care for the kids and give them a loving home where they can heal."



fall in love with. She's been with us for eight months and we just love her like our own."

The Ruckers will be leaving for their next military duty station, Georgia, in November. When asked if they were going to continue being foster parents, they both smiled and said "Absolutely." Susan said, "Before we came to California, our orders kept changing. Now I know why we came here. It's to become foster parents. It's our calling. I would encourage individuals who have love in their hearts and room in their homes to become foster parents."



**For more information on becoming a foster parent in San Diego County, call Foster Care Licensing at (877) 792-KIDS (5437).
For information on adoptions, call (877) 423-6788.**

SD County CCYF Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Conference Featured Local Experts, Speaker and Youth Essay Contest Winners

The San Diego County Commission on Children, Youth and Families sponsored a forum, "Celebrating the Journey," on Oct. 19 to commemorate its 20th anniversary, at the Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Center.

The conference featured local experts discussing the accomplishments and challenges of the past 20 years in working to improve services and support for children and families. **Supervisor Greg Cox** made opening remarks.

"The Commission has worked for the past 20 years to nurture children and strengthen families by engaging communities and promoting integrated services," said Supervisor Cox about the event. "It's important to celebrate this milestone, and look ahead to other steps we can take to help children and families."

The keynote address, "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child: But Do We Know How to Raise a Village?" was given by John "Jack" Calhoun, founding president and CEO of the National Crime Prevention Council. Calhoun revolutionized crime prevention by changing its definition to encompass building vital communities that do not produce crime, and creating programs that involve youth as positive change agents in their communities.

As part of the 20th anniversary activities, the Commission sponsored an essay contest for children and youth to hear from kids about how they are doing and their vision of San Diego's future. The essay contest was an overwhelming success. Three hundred seventy-four essays were submitted from 51 schools countywide. The essay contest selection committee read the submitted essays and selected



Pictured from left: Joseph DeSimone, Sonny Ruiz, Andrew Tuttle, Judge Susan Huguenor, Riley Henderson, and Daniel Millan

one grand prize winner, one first place winner in each age category and several second place winners. The winners were recognized at the event and their essays were shared with participants at the forum.

The grand prize essay winner was Sonny Ruiz, a 12th grade student at Summit Juvenile Court and Community Schools. High School age winners were: 1st place - Meklit Mengistu, Garfield High School, 2nd Place - Isabel Tjierin, Grade 12, Garfield High School, Kim Dong, Grade 12, John Muir High School, and Sandra Velasco, Grade 11, Garfield High School. Middle School Age winners were: 1st place - Giovanni Ocampo, Grade 7, Monroe Clarke Middle School, 2nd Place - Joseph DeSimone, Grade 8, Great Start School, and Daniel Millan, Grade 6, Porter Elementary School. Elementary School age were: 1st Place - Riley Henderson, Grade 2, Kumeyaay School, 2nd Place - Vicky Nguyen, Grade 5, Rosa Parks Elementary School; Andrew Tuttle, Grade 1, Great Start School.

REMINDER: All Agency employees are required to complete annual compliance training by Jan. 31, 2007. To access the training from your desktop computer, please log on to: <http://10.32.14.63/default.asp>. **Remember, the training must be completed by Jan. 31, 2007.**



SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY

Local Rotary Clubs Changing Academy Students' Lives

Local Rotary Clubs have made a significant impact on the youth at San Pasqual Academy, a first-in-the-nation residential education campus for foster teens. With "Service Above Self" as their motto, several Rotary Clubs have stepped into the lives of the Academy youth and exposed them to new opportunities.

While the Escondido East Rotary provides backpacks and gift cards to the youth for back-to-school, the Downtown Rotary in Escondido recognizes two students each quarter for their outstanding academic achievement, presenting them with a plaque and gift certificate at a luncheon.

The Rancho Santa Fe Rotary sponsors the Academy's Interact Club, a community service organization, and with the La Jolla Sunrise

Rotary, they also sponsor four outstanding juniors to attend the Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) Conference in Idyllwild. This year, an Academy senior was invited back to help lead the conference with the Rotarians. The La Jolla Sunrise Rotary hosted the RYLA participants at their Officer's Dinner and the students were very well received.

The La Jolla Sunrise Rotary has also teamed up with the National Charity League and Friends of San Pasqual Academy to rehabilitate an alumni house on campus, while six students spruced up part of the Jocelyn Senior Center in Escondido for International Rotary at Work Day.

The Rotary's involvement with San Pasqual Academy is a win-win situation for everyone!

Employee Satisfaction Committee Update

The Employee Satisfaction Committee, spearheaded by **Jean Shepard** and **Paula-Landau Cox**, has continued to meet regularly.

The group, consisting of volunteer representatives from across the Agency, has identified several key issues, and will be presenting recommendations for action to the Executive Team this winter.

Meanwhile, inspired by the committee, the Agency's Training and Development department has already begun laying the groundwork for new classes aimed at improving internal communication and other skills critical to promoting a positive team environment.

Stay tuned for further developments.



San Pasqual Academy Varsity football schedule 2006

Citrus League 8-Man Football

Fri. 2 PM Nov. 3 Calvary Christian (Vista)

Fri. 2 PM Nov. 10 All Tribes Am. Ind. Charter

Both are home games

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with

HHSA Director
Jean M. Shepard

Director of Operations
Paula Landau-Cox

• First Friday of each month • 8 a.m. - noon

• (619) 515-6555

North Central Region: Reunifying Families

The North Central Region focuses on serving families and promoting healthy and thriving communities. A small percentage of families face significant obstacles, resulting in abuse or neglect of their children, and need the attention of the Agency and the community to safely parent their children in the future. In these cases, children who are in out-of-home care receive the love and support of foster families or relative caregivers. The goal is to help families reunite when it is safe to do so.

In July, 16 families were successfully reunified in the North Central Region due to the efforts of parents, foster parents, relatives, Community Services for Families, and Childrens Services social workers. Another 12 were reunited in August.

Some reunification successes include: two boys are back with their father, a mother is now caring for her five year old and twins, and a teenager is now reunified with her parents. In all cases, the parents made substantial progress in the steps needed to reunify with their children. Teamwork and frequent visitation seem to be the critical factors for timely and successful reunification of the families.

Compliance Office: (619) 515-4244

Toll-Free Compliance Hotline: (866) 549-0004

An ethical workplace is your right... and your responsibility...

By the Numbers



♦ Diabetes is a leading cause of death for San Diego County residents, with 529 deaths reported in 2004. The HHSA Regions with the highest rates per 100,000 population are Central and South Regions (29.8, 26.0 respectively), while North Coastal and North Central had the lowest rates (13.8, 13.7 respectively).¹

♦ San Diego County hospital admissions for diabetes have been on the rise from 2001-2003. The admission rate for short term/uncontrolled diabetes was 45.8 per 100,000 population in 2003. While the admission rate for conditions of long term diabetes (i.e. renal, circulatory disease, etc.) was 89.1 per 100,000 population. The rate of admissions for lower extremity amputations due to diabetes mellitus is declining, (26.0 per 100,000 population, 2003).²

1 California Department of Health Services, Death Statistical Master Files; SANDAG January 1 population estimates. Prepared by Community Epidemiology, Health & Human Services Agency, County of San Diego, 05/16/2006.

2 Parker, JP; Simon, V; Parham, C; Teague, J; and Li, Z; Preventable Hospitalizations in California: Statewide and County Trends (1997-2003), Sacramento, CA: Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, November 2005. Website: <http://www.oshpd.ca.gov/HQAD/Outcomes/PQI/index.htm>, accessed 10/25/06.

To request additional health statistics describing health behaviors, diseases and injuries for specific populations, health trends and comparisons to national targets, please call the County's Community Health Statistics Unit at (619) 285-6479. To access the latest data and data links, including the Community Profiles and the 2004 Core Public Health Indicator document, go to www.sdhealth-statistics.com.

Emergency Survival Program

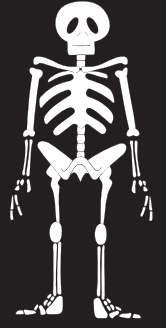
There's been a lot of talk about disasters lately. Is *your* family prepared? There are many resources available to help you. For example, the [County's Office of Emergency Services](#) offers an Emergency Survival Program (ESP) with monthly tips to increase emergency preparedness at home, in the community, at work and at school.

The November theme is "Test Your Plan," all about reviewing family plans for an emergency.

[The County's emergency page](#) will provide valuable information in the event of a disaster.



Public Health Nursing Halloween In-Service



County Receives Workplace Training Honors



Jaye Yoshonis, left, and **Susan Curtin**, right, receive awards from Robin Carvajal, center, Director of the Employee Training Institute and Workplace Learning Resource Center. The honors recognize excellence in large-scale training program development, coordination and management.



Agency Director **Jean Shepard** spoke during the Oct. Manager's Forum held at the Marina Village.



Dr. Nick Yphantides, M.D., author of *My Big Fat Greek Diet* was the guest speaker at the Oct. Manager's Forum.



Physical therapist **Neil Goyal** works with 8-year-old **Ashley** on one of the "Lite Gait" units donated by a private benefactor.

North Regions: Benefactor Makes Medical Therapy Safer

A private benefactor has made it possible for more than 1900 children with disabilities served by the California Children Services Medical Therapy Units (MTU) in six public schools countywide to have new ergonomically safe equipment.

The "LiteGait" suspension is used to improve a child's ability to walk by using a harness that secures the child over a treadmill. Escondido MTU Physical Therapist **Daphne DeCoster** said "One mother was thrilled" when her toddler-aged child, with a condition that prevented her from independent movement, walked for 10 minutes in the "LiteGait," then smiled and laughed when assisted to take her first three steps into her mother's arms.

An electrically adjustable treatment table has also been purchased that can be raised up or down to a desired height so pre-school through high school-age children can practice wheelchair to tub or car transfers. The state-of-the-art equipment not only minimizes injuries for both patient and therapist but most importantly, accelerates progress in therapy and permits more advanced activities, increasing the patient's independence and quality of life.

Boomer Biker Event a Roaring Success

Immunization is not just for kids - adults need protection, too!

More than 60 bikers, most of them Baby Boomers in their 50s, rode into the Biggs Harley-Davidson/Buell Dealership in San Marcos on Oct. 14th, and were immunized against influenza by Public Health Nurses from North Inland Public Health Center.

The purpose of the event was to demonstrate the importance of immunizations for healthy, active adults. A video news release of the event will be shown throughout California. Sponsors included the Agency's Immunization Branch, California Adult Immunization Coalition and the California Distance Learning Health Network.

Influenza is a serious and very contagious disease. Every year, an estimated 36,000 people die from the flu and its complications. The best way to protect against the flu is to get flu vaccine every year.

Other diseases adults should consider getting immunized against are tetanus, diphtheria and pertus-

sis (whooping cough), pneumococcal disease, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox), hepatitis A and hepatitis B. Everyone should talk with their doctor about which vaccines they need.

The following staff counseled and/or provided flu vaccine:

North Inland Public Health Center:
Naomi Brown, PHN II
Joanne Klein, PHN II
Heather LaBelle, PHN II

HHSA, PHS Immunization Branch:
Mary Beckhelm, PHN III
Anita Secor, PHN II
Sue Hunt, PHN IV

Others at the event were: **Dr. Nancy Bowen**, County Public Health Officer; **Adrienne Collins Yancey**, Chief, Immunization Branch; Christine Garcia, Immunization Management Consultant; Suzanne Bouveron, state DHS Health Education Consultant; and Kathe Gustafson, consultant and retired Immunization Coordinator.



The Boomer Bikers on their way to San Marcos to highlight the need for adults to get immunized against influenza.

Leap of Faith Calendar Available

The annual Leap of Faith calendar from San Diego County Adoptions is now available.

The calendar, featuring county children waiting to be adopted, is available for free at any San Diego public library, select branches of the San Diego County Credit Union and at KFMB-TV in Kearny Mesa.

There are between 6,000 to 7,000 children waiting to be adopted in San Diego County.



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